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PRINCIPLES IN BUSINESS.

At the recent convention of the National Educational Association there was an interesting discussion by President Butler, of Columbia University, President Eliot, of Harvard University, and others concerning the question of shortening the college course—that is, the time taken to obtain the bachelor's degree, according to the Wall Street Journal. Dr. Butler's idea is that the secondary schools below, and the professional schools above, are reaching into the domain of the collegiate course, so that the latter is in serious danger. He thinks that for a young man who is to adopt a profession, a two years' college course is sufficient, for if he devotes four years to college, entering at the age of seventeen or eighteen, and then three or four years in a professional school, he will be 25 or 26 years old before he is prepared to begin the serious business of life. Another speaker, Prof. West, said that the chief danger to liberal education is "commercialism, the feverish pursuit of what pays as the one end of life." This discussion has little relation perhaps to the business career, relating entirely to those young men who are preparing for a profession, but it suggests the question as to which is the best age at which the youth should abandon the school and enter into the great productive energies of life. For the vast majority of the people, this question is decided for them by the law of necessity. They are obliged after leaving, say the grammar schools, and while yet mere boys, to enter the arena of business or industry. A certain proportion are able to pursue their educational course still further, say, to the end of the high or secondary school, but the number who are able to enter college are comparatively few though there has been a notable increase in the past few years.

The rule has been that the earlier a person got into business the better, it being argued that the practical training he would secure in the actual experience of business would be of far greater value to him than any theoretical knowledge he could obtain in the schools. The result has been, in years past, that, as a rule, the minds that were engaged in the professions were better trained and more orderly, than those engaged in business. But of late years, when the commercial career has offered such extraordinary opportunities, so that commerce has become as attractive to the ambition of man as even war and politics formerly did, there is manifest a growing tendency to encourage a higher commercial education as the best foundation for a successful business career.

In other words, as the educational leaders are discussing the feasibility of shortening the educational training necessary for a professional career, there is a tendency to lengthen out the educational training for a business career. And there can be no doubt that this tendency is in the right direction. Of especial importance is it, in this age when business rules the world, and the captains of industry have become the leaders in all national development, that those entering a business career should have some training in the principles of philosophy. Their minds should be grounded in the ethical principles which should underly all right living.

The danger that threatens our business life is not dishonesty in its grosser forms. On the contrary, the old adage that "honesty is the best policy" is one of the corner stones of business. Never was the standard of honesty higher than it is to-day. There probably is less stealing than there has ever been in any age of the world. Moreover there is a high appreciation of the value of a man's word. It has a commercial rating. The other day a business man of whom a written promise was demanded in a business transaction, refused to give it, stating that as a member of the Stock Exchange, his oral promise was as good as a written contract, and it was so accepted.

But, nevertheless, modern business needs above all things a code of recognized principles that shall control men in their business relations to each other, as buyers and sellers, as producers and consumers, as employers and wage-earners. By this is not meant a code of principles based on the law of necessity and utility, but one based upon the law of right in its higher interpretations. As business becomes more and more powerful, in fact the controlling factor in life, there needs to be, directing and restraining it, more of the higher law of justice and truth. There is manifest in commercial life an impatience and disregard of law when it interferes with the progress of the great transaction immediately in hand. There is a tendency to sacrifice all else to success. In no other way may a knowledge and appreciation of true principles be better obtained than by early instruction in an educational institution conducted on safe and sound lines. Nor will time be lost that is devoted in such training even though one is to devote his life to the commercial career.

Great quantities of gold exist in the desert sands of the southwestern United States. In the new process of Thomas A. Edison, the air metal falling almost vertically, while the sand and gravel are blown away. The material is handled at a cost of about eight cents per ton. The apparatus of Prof. Elmer E. Gates, includes a dynamo on a truck, and as this is drawn along scoops raise the sand, pass it in a stream through a magnetic field, and dump it, the gold receiving a static charge that causes it to fly to a metal knob of opposite polarity. Samples from an 80-mile stretch of desert yielded 12 to 18 cents of gold per ton.